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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 000582

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [SCUL](#) [ECON](#) [NP](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: NEPALI MPS FIND INDIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTIVE ON
UNREST IN TERA

REF: A. KATHMANDU 267

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 266

[1](#)C. KATHMANDU 265

[1](#)D. KATHMANDU 232

Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Nepali Congress - Democratic (NC-D) Members of Parliament Prakash Mahat and Arjun Thapa told Poloff February 1 that PM Singh had said one day earlier the government of India was ready to support the government of Nepal in addressing the unrest in Nepal's Terai region. In a meeting the same day, Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee encouraged the Interim Nepali Parliament to address the concerns of the Madhesis, according to Mahat. Mahat acknowledged that Indian-based Hindu fundamentalists and monarchists might be contributing to the unrest in Nepal, but not the government of India. Mahat could not confirm rumors that the Maoists were dumping good weapons in India and buying poor ones to turn in to the UN. In a separate meeting, Indian Nepal expert Gen. Ashok Mehta opined that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Hindu fundamentalist organizations such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) shared an interest in supporting the Madhesis in Nepal, and might be contributing to the unrest. END SUMMARY.

Nepalis Party Leader Describes Terai Unrest to PM Singh

12. (C) Nepali Congress - Democratic (NC-D) Interim Parliament Member and former Minister Prakash Mahat told Embassy New Delhi PolOff Feb. 1 that, in a brief meeting the day before, Prime Minister Singh had asked him to describe the current unrest in the Terai region in southern Nepal. Mahat said the Prime Minister had assured him that the government of India (GOI) was ready to support the government of Nepal (GON) in bringing the situation under control. In a separate January 31 meeting, according to Mahat, Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee told Mahat and Nepali Interim Parliament Member Arjun Thapa (NC-D) that the Nepalese Interim Parliament must address the concerns of the Madhesis.

"He said that the matter must not go out of the hands of the political parties," reported Mahat, opining that by "political parties," Mukherjee was actually referring to the Nepali Congress and NC-D parties. Mukherjee said it was imperative that the Interim Parliament address the unrest in southern Nepal, according to Mahat, and stressed that the Maoists should not be allowed to join the interim government until arms management was complete. "There should be no environment of fear" during the upcoming elections, Mahat quoted the Foreign Minister as saying. Mahat was confident that the new constitution drafted by the Constituent Assembly would address the concerns of the Madhesis, but said the problem was that they are demanding an immediate solution. Madhesis wanted to have a voice in the elections of the Constituent Assembly. They had legitimate complaints, he acknowledged, including the fact that they were underrepresented in the army, have endured obstacles to becoming citizens, and that there is no federal structure to

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assure their representation in the government.

Monarchists and Hindu Fundamentalists

13. (C) Dismissing rumors that the Indian government was somehow involved in stirring up tensions in the region, Mahat said he thought the GOI had had no direct involvement in the unrest in the Terai. "Some Indian monarchists and Hindu fundamentalists might be involved, but there is no hidden agenda from the Indian government," he asserted, theorizing that he thought the monarchists were using the "Terai factor" to advance their own agenda and prevent the elections from taking place. "There are elements not looking for a solution, but just trying to create problems," asserted Mahat, adding, "The monarchists are deliberately stirring up trouble, and are using the Madhesis for their own purposes." He commented that he did not think the Madhesis had links with Indian political parties in the provinces of Bihar or Uttar Pradesh.

Pointing the Finger at India

14. (C) Senior Maoist leader and head of International Affairs CP Gajurel (Note: Gajurel was released from a three-year stint in an Indian prison for passport fraud in December 2006. End note.) accused India's Hindu fundamentalist organizations Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) for stirring up violence in the Terai, according to February 3 edition of "The Indian Express." Gajurel claimed that Upendra Yadav, leader of the Madhesis People's Rights Forum (MPRF), had attended a convention of the RSS-VHP in Gorakhpur, India in December, 2006 after which the MPRF's movement became violent. (Note: Maoist Supremo Prachanda said at a press conference February 1 in Kathmandu that Hindu fundamentalists and monarchists are "linked to India's ruling parties." End note.)

15. (C) Think-tank expert General Ashok Mehta suggested in a January 31 meeting with Poloff that it would be in India's interest to have a politically empowered diaspora. "Therefore," he continued, "it makes sense that Indians might

be involved in supporting ethnic Indian Madhesis." There are sympathies within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the RSS for a Hindu Kingdom, added Mehta, "that won't die down among the stalwarts of those parties." Mehta added that, though they would never say so publicly, he thought India would prefer that a figure-head King remain in power in Nepal.

No Evidence of Maoists Selling or Buying Weapons in India

¶6. (C) Asked if there was any truth to rumors that Maoists are bringing their good weapons across the border to Bihar, India, and turning in poor quality weapons to the UN instead, Mahat said he had seen no evidence of that. However, in light of the planned Nepali elections, "it is the small

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weapons we should be worried about," he remarked, noting that Maoists would not use large weapons against the army or police for fear of retaliation, and that they would use smaller weapons to intimidate citizens.

Comment: All Politics Are Local

¶7. (C) While rumors abound that the Government of India is directly involved with unrest in the Terai region of Nepal, we have yet to see any support for this allegation. Meanwhile, the BJP party and the RSS grassroots organization, which are strong in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar on Nepal's southern border, may have an interest in creating unrest in Nepal. By stirring up Hindu nationalism, and playing on the very real possibility that the world's only Hindu kingdom is on the brink of disappearing, these political parties can garner support for themselves in India with an eye to defeating the Indian Congress party in state polls in Uttar Pradesh that would help their quest to regain power in New Delhi. The central government, evidently supporting the government of Nepal and its Interim Parliament's ability to resolve its problems, has limited control over the regions that border Nepal. This apparent lack of control over the local government was exemplified recently when a Union Minister, directed by PM Singh and UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi to visit the communal violence-ridden town of Gorakhpur, was requested by the district administration not to enter the city (which is near the Nepali border). PM Singh may pledge his support to the government of Nepal, and Mukherjee may offer advice, but neither has full control over fundamentalist organizations such as the RSS and the VHP.
END COMMENT.

(Note: This message has been coordinated with Embassy Kathmandu. End Note.)
MULFORD